Lafayette Historical Society

NEWSLETTER

P.O. Box 133, Lafayette, California 94549

President: Oliver Hamlin (283–6822)
Editor: Shirley Thomson (935–2270)

October 1988

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Hello, again. In the past few months LHS has been involved with the City of Lafayette in making a decision whether or not to acquire the old Oliveira home in Burton Valley which was otherwise doomed to demolition. The plan was to save the house and move it to the Lafayette Community Center which is owned by the City. Considerable interest was generated on this matter; timing was critical, and many technical problems arose. In the end, we decided not to do it – that is, not this time around.

The idea, however, is not dead, and eventually LHS should have a focal point for its use and for the citizens' use where we can bring together our archives and historical artifacts in a central place. Hopefully, the opportunity will come up again soon. I believe the idea is sound, and I believe we have made progress toward that end in working together with the Lafayette City Council. It must be a joint effort. It is up to us to keep the idea alive. We are looking into possibilities already.

On Thursday, November 17, Program Chair George Wasson will put on an evening program with video showing some of the older homes in the St. Marys Road/Burton Valley area of Lafayette and some of the folklore that goes along with them. Save the date. The place is to be the Lafayette School Auditorium.

We also want additional information. Anyone who has personal knowledge of older homes and pioneer families of the area is urged to call George Wasson (283–4420). We would very much like to have your input. If you have such knowledge to share with us for this program, please call George right away.

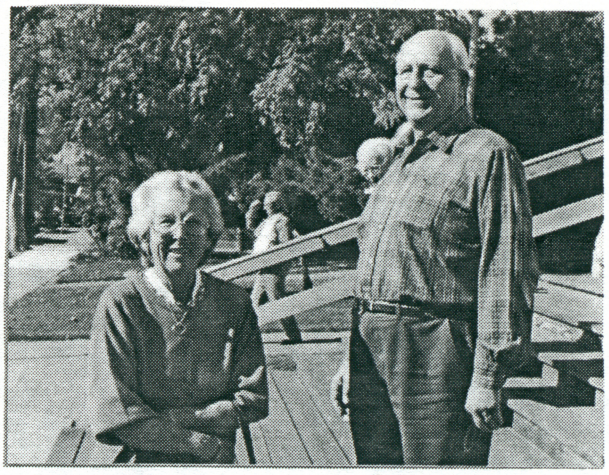
Ollie Hamlin

Thursday, November 17, 7:30 p.m.

PROGRAM MEETING: EARLY LAFAYETTE HOMES

Lafayette School Auditorium

«« Some LHS members and guests pause on the steps of the old capitol building on the November 1987 outing to historic Vallejo.



Jim and Peggy Craig (on Vallejo tour). After years of contributions to LHS activities—Peggy maintaining the newspaper clipping files, Jim serving as Landmarks Chair—the Craigs have retired from LHS office this year; both are missed at board and committee meetings.

1988–1989
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and COMMITTEE CHAIRS

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Bill Wakeman.....Landmarks / Bd. Dir.
George Wasson.....Program / Fire Engine
Betsy Willcuts.....Walking Tours / Bd. Dir.

Welcome to Jack and Barbara Bailey, Nancy Holtzapple, Bill Wakeman, and Bill and Irma Somerton; we are delighted to have these new and willing workers active in LHS.

"EARLY LAFAYETTE HOMES"

presented by

Lafayette Historical Society

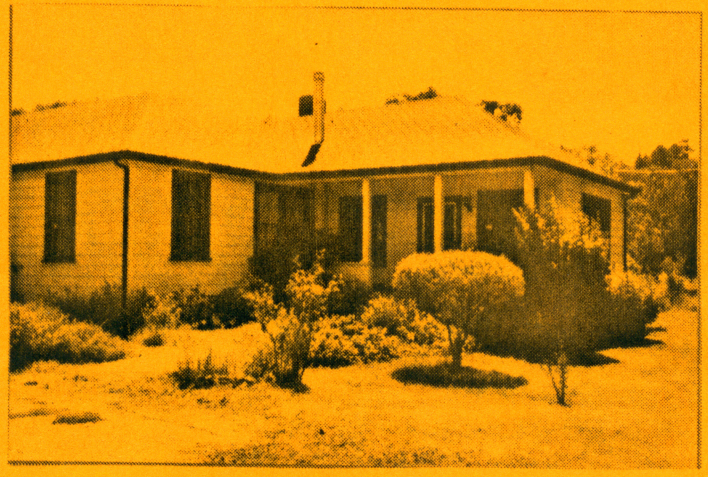
7:30 pm, Thursday, November 17, 1988 **Lafayette School Auditorium**

Interest that developed in the possible preservation of the Oliveira–Mancini homestead home in Burton Valley has generated further interest in identifying other significant early homes in Lafayette.

Our fall meeting is planned as an audio and video report on the identifiable early houses of east Lafayette on or near St. Marys Road and Burton Valley. The participants will be people who have lived in these homes since 1920 and beyond; at least one was born in Lafayette.

We hope to show where the early homes were located and how the early ranches were subdivided to the present lots and residences. One of those early homes was the Oliveira home. Others of later vintage are still standing but have had major changes or additions to their present form.

Joseph A. Oliveira home, One Oliveira Lane, Lafayette (circa 1912). In foreground: Louis, George, and Ted Oliveira. On porch: Rose Oliveira, holding daughter Evelyn Oliveira Mancini.



We think this will be an entertaining and informative meeting for people of all ages and may be of particular interest to some of the children of families that live in Lafayette. Everyone is invited! Bring a neighbor or friend.

For further information, call George Wasson at 283–4420 or Oliver Hamlin at 283–6822.

«Oliveira/Mancini home, July 1988

300 FOURTH–GRADERS LEARN LAFAYETTE HISTORY

Betsy Willcuts and Pat Gowdy, Coordinators of the Lafayette History Tours program for fourth grade students, report that in April and May of 1988—the progam's third year—eleven docents conducted two–hour tours for 300 students. The students represented twelve classrooms of the Lafayette Elementary School District.

Tours included walks through historic downtown Lafayette, walks among the pioneer graves at the Lafayette Cemetery, and a tombstone–rubbing project. Copies of *LaFayette, A Pictorial History* and a slide presentation of pioneer faces and places were provided classroom teachers.

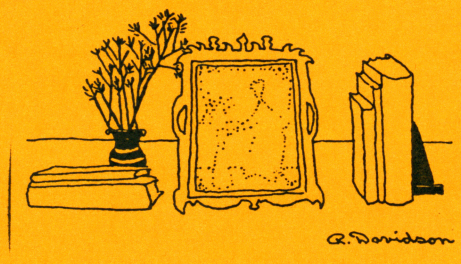
Teachers' comments—ranging from "super" to "terrific"—confirm that Betsy, Pat, and their team of knowledgeable docents are providing a truly valuable service to the community.

The docent team for spring 1988 included Sara Brown, Charlotte Dethero, Fran Dibble, Ruth Dyer, Patt Meinbress, Susie Schaefer, Chris Schreiber, Mary Lou Van Galder, and Jean White.

1988 DUES

A few longstanding members have not yet paid 1988 dues. We hope they will respond to our recent reminders by sending their checks to LHS, P.O. Box 133, Lafayette.

Family membership	*$ 5.00*
Student membership	*$ 2.50*
Business membership	*$ 50.00*
Life membership	*$100.00*



REMINDER: LHS BOOKS MAKE WONDERFUL CHRISTMAS GIFTS

LaFayette —A Pictorial History, $6

The Improvers of Lafayette, $9.95

HEARTY THANKS to Lafayette Businesspeople

Through the generosity of local businesspeople, Historical Society books are available to the public at convenient locations in Lafayette.

We rely on—and thank—the good people at Conti Camera Shops, Lafayette Book Store, and the Chamber of Commerce who have been helping out the Society for some years, and we want to welcome Milan Gilmore's Amadeus Books (good music and comfortable browsing) as our newest distribution point. Thank you!

Lafayette Book Store
3579 Mt. Diablo Boulevard.....284–1233

Lafayette Chamber of Commerce
1003 Oak Hill Road..... 284-7404

Conti Camera Shops
3518C Mt. Diablo Boulevard.....283–6377

Amadeus Books
3369 Mt. Diablo Boulevard.....284–2665

Way Side Inn

EUCHRED

by Ray Peters

Once, while having a conversation with Ken Brown before he passed on to that great Lafayette in the sky, I asked him what he could recall about the Way Side Inn in the early days when it was a saloon.

His eyes sparkled, and with great delight he related to me a tale that was carefully rehearsed, obviously one that had been told many times before.

"It was at the Way Side Inn that I was *euchred*," he fairly shouted. (Now if you had known Ken Brown, you would also know that he "fairly shouted" almost everything he said.) He stopped after that heavy word, waiting for me to respond.

"How were you . . . *euchred*?" I asked hesitantly. The word was totally unfamiliar to me. I had seen it before but had never actually spoken it out loud, and I was somewhat uncertain as to its meaning. I feared somehow the use of it that first time before that great shouting cowboy.

He went on to explain that when he was a small boy he often visited the Way Side Inn together with the men, for there were few watering holes in the area for any but cattle. (His grandfather Elam was a teetotaler and had not allowed any such dens of iniquity in the town he founded.) Ken described the nickel slot machines in the place at that time. He played his only nickel and—of course—won the jackpot on that very first pull.

The cowboys in the place immediately made it very clear to him that a winner of a jackpot must buy a round of drinks for all. Well, the place must have been pretty crowded or the jackpot very small. At any rate, the whole jackpot was spent in its entirety on that single round of drinks.

That's Ken's definition of euchred. It was the first time I had ever spoken it. It was also the first (and only) time I have ever heard that slot machines once existed in Lafayette.

Editor's Note:
Thanks to contributor Ray Peters for this remembrance of Ken Brown and old Lafayette.

We welcome your articles or other items that might be of interest to our readers. Please send them to editor Shirley Thomson, 1062 Via Baja, Lafayette.

BEHIND–THE–SCENES TOUR OF BANCROFT LIBRARY WITH CCCHS

Contra Costa County Historical Society has scheduled a most interesting day touring Bancroft Library on Friday, November 4. The full–day event will include a behind–the–scenes tour, a look at the Plate of Brass (formerly known as the Drake Plate) and the diary of Patrick Breen (of the Donner Party), and a visit to the Manuscript Division. J. R. K. Kantor, University Archivist, will speak at noon when the group lunches at the Faculty Club.

The number of people who can be accommodated is limited; reservations should be made as early as possible. Call CCCHS History Center (939–9180) for information.

PROGRAM MEETING

Thursday, November 17, 1988 — 7:30 pm

LAFAYETTE SCHOOL AUDITORIUM

EARLY LAFAYETTE HOMES

LAFAYETTE HISTORICAL SOCIETY
1062 Via Baja
Lafayette, California 94549

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